

"Home" for the holidays

Activities across campus create festive atmosphere for all

BY LAURA CHAO AND AMY BRYSON

Whether celebrating Hanukkah, Christmas, Diwali or Kwanzaa, activities across campus and on hall bring a piece of home to NCSSM for the holidays.

"[Holiday activities] make the hall more like home which is something everyone on hall misses most around the holidays," senior Giffin Daughtridge said.

SLI Luran Whitworth of Reynolds 1C, 2C and 1D, along with her RLAs, are trying to organize activities such as a CD swap, a community service project, an inter-hall ice skating trip and culture show-and-tells.

"The activities that seem to have gotten the most turn-out have been the MPC film 'Born into Brothels' and Katie Dektar's Judaism 101 talk," Whitworth said. "We are trying hard to have a sort of multicultural approach to the holidays since we have a really diverse hall."

After presenting the principles of Ramadan to her own hall, junior Sarah Mohammed was invited to share her culture on several other halls.

"I was really happy to do it mostly because [it gave me] the chance to talk about my religion with others," Mohammed said. "They were really

interested, especially in the meaning behind all of the traditions. I feel a difference here in how open-minded people are and how much they want to know about [my faith]."

Campus-wide, faculty and staff have been coordinating various other holiday events to occur over the next couple of weeks. As part of the Exercise-Nutrition-Sleep-Humor initiative, the annual Jingle Bell Trot will be held on Dec. 7. Participants will be dressed for the holidays and will adorn their shoes with bells as they make their laps around campus. The Annual Student-Staff Holiday Dinner, to be held Dec. 11 in the PEC, will include decorations, food and holiday performances.

"[We try to celebrate the holidays] in a way so that [activities] are all-inclusive, so everyone will

feel comfortable," said Joan Barber, vice chancellor of student life. "I am always so pleased, excited and comforted that we respect individual differences here. That is how we can have all of these activities, because we actually want to learn about other cultures."

Whether you are fasting, coloring a turkey, making a gingerbread house, ice skating or caroling, activities across campus provide a look into other cultures, make NCSSM a home away from home and offer a break from the monotony of schoolwork.

"For the holidays, everyone needs a little stress relief. Everyone is working 24 hours a day and some are very stressed and overworked," SLI Starr Brown said. "It's good to do things that remind them of home."



Photos by Amy Bryson and Luis Zapata

Left: Caitlin Crowgey, Jenna Bundy and Nandita Rao decorated their room with trees, stockings and even a stuffed reindeer, showing their holiday spirit. Above: Drew Courtright serves turkey to members of Second Hill during a festive Thanksgiving meal held in the Woolworth Room.

Spontaneous performances reveal musical talent

BY KRISTIN OAKLEY

With so many eclectic souls on campus, it seems fitting that there be a resident troubadour to play the background music for the community. A new band, Wall of Sound, has arisen to make life melodious.

One boring pre-SAT night caused the spontaneous arrival of a new music scene. Juniors Gabriel Whaley and Garrett Schlesinger decided to perform an improvisational concert. They first tried the Third Beall I-Viz, but soon were relocated to outside the Assembly Hall with only a guitar, a keyboard and some amps. The crowd responded actively that night.

"It was high energy," Whaley said. "Non-stop on your feet kind of energy."

Whaley believed that the intensity of the music was responsible for the concert's success.

"The upbeat style of whatever we were playing [attracted the crowd because it provided] energy after such a long, boring and uneventful day," he said.

Encouraged by the positive response, Whaley and Schlesinger decided to continue providing entertainment and expressing themselves musically. Wall of Sound soon expanded, adding juniors Reid Huffman on bass and Ben Ryan

on guitar to Whaley on keyboard and Schlesinger on the guitar and vocals.

Ryan said that he chose to join Whaley and Schlesinger's band because doing so is "the natural desire of musicians."

There was a good and steady crowd throughout a recent concert during a Fourth West I-Viz. Several returning fans from the first concert, along with many newcomers to the improvisational music scene on campus, attended. The band played classic hits such as "Pianoman," "Mary Jane's Last Dance," "Yesterday" and "Sweet Carolina." Wall of Sound also stuck to its roots, with its classic moments on the piano, and brought in what Huffman described as "the acoustic sound."

"I especially enjoyed the harmonica accompaniment," junior Natalia Chodelski said. "That's something I've almost never heard in a band. I thought it blended well with [Whaley's] keyboarding."

However, many of the band members believed that the performance was not their best.

"Although we sound terrible tonight, I hope people don't hate us for this," Schlesinger said the night of the concert. "It's because of the circular lounge."

Whaley also hopes to do better next time.



Photo by Luis Zapata

Garrett Schlesinger plays guitar with his band in the lounge at a Fourth West I-Viz.

"All of the guys are extremely talented with their own individual instruments," he said. "We just need practice before we hit our real potential because the talent and skill is there."

The craziness of campus life both helps and harms the band.

"We'd love to play more, but

not only are there not a lot of opportunities, but there's not a lot of time to practice," Huffman said. "It's good to find people that genuinely enjoy playing music, plus it's a whole lot easier to get together to practice because I'm only a few steps away from their rooms."